

Introductory remarks by Philip Mangano
Collaborative Initiative on Chronic Homelessness
Satellite Broadcast
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I've spent a lot of time watching these broadcasts, never thinking I'd be participating in quite this way. As many of you know, I've been an advocate for homeless people up in Massachusetts. I was the founding executive director of the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance for 12 years prior to coming here for the past 11 months. But I can't say that all that much has changed. Washington is a place of advocacy from without and within.

And from within, I must again express my appreciation to Secretary Mel Martinez for the hospitality and commitment he has extended through HUD to the Interagency Council.

As you know, Secretary Martinez has served as the chair of the Council for the past year. Next month HHS Secretary

Tommy Thompson will become the chair and VA Secretary Tony Principi will be the vice chair. Their commitment to the collaborative work of the Council is evidenced in their personal and professional support and in the NOFA we discuss today. Their individual commitments made the **unprecedented** happen in their agencies.

Many said this day would not come. That the idea of four federal agencies overcoming the statutory, regulatory, and cultural barriers would never become a reality.

You know it's a reality because you've downloaded it. What a reality.

It is the work of the agencies and staffs. They made the vision a reality. It was the privilege of the Interagency Council to challenge the past and to coordinate the interagency work,

but the long afternoons, evenings, conference calls – the work of creation – belongs to these four federal agencies in three Secretariats. They went the extra mile for the past 7 months and birthed the NOFA.

Do you remember the first cell phones? They were oversized and cumbersome. But they pointed to a new way of communication. And for many street outreach workers, a new way of service.

Well, this NOFA is a lot like that early cell phone – cumbersome – but filled with promise. The promise of a new way of serving homeless people. Coordinated housing and services.

This NOFA is the prototype. It hadn't been done before. But it promises to be the template for further investment.

As you may know, the resources for this NOFA were garnered – gleaned – from 2003 funds.

In the President's budget proposal for 2004, the promise of new investment is **kept**. Not only is the funding for the Samaritan Initiative doubled – this \$35 million NOFA **is** the beginning of that Samaritan Initiative – doubled to \$70 million in the President's budget, but there is an overall increase in funding for homeless specific programs of **14%**, plus increases in mainstream housing and service programs to prevent and end homelessness.

For any of you who are agnostics about these numbers, I have good news – you can look them up.

Not only does that 14% increase compare favorably with other budget categories, for example, defense is up 4.2% and homeland security 5.5%, but also is astonishing given what you are all facing in your states and localities. The vast majority of states have had to cut their budgets resulting in diminished resources for homeless people. Same in cities and towns and rural areas.

So any increase, any new resource is welcome. And the President's budgets have reflected increases in spending to address homelessness in both 2003 and 2004.

But new and increased funding to what end? What is the performance outcome sought in a deeper investment?

As you know, this Administration has followed the research and prioritized the ending of chronic homelessness, both as a

response to those most vulnerable with disabilities and in long term homelessness, but also as a way to free up resources for other profiles of homeless people. Research told us that those experiencing chronic homelessness are consuming half of all homeless resources. And they are most vulnerable to further complications on the streets of our cities and in the encampments in urban and rural areas.

So we follow the research with policy. The President's initiative to end chronic homelessness was begun in his 2003 budget proposal and re-emphasized in the 2004 document released two weeks ago.

And now this NOFA follows research and policy with **resources** and implementation. You know that implementing the end of chronic homelessness will not come in one NOFA, but in a ten-year strategic commitment.

But with these NOFA resources we have a specific intent, a targeted trajectory.

That intent is to create a **new standard of expectation.**

Moving away from ad hoc responses that shuffle our poorest neighbors from one locality to another, or from one side of town to another, or from one homeless program to another, or, for that matter, from the streets to jails, this NOFA calls, instead, for solutions. The new research and new technologies make the old responses antiquated.

Our move is toward a visible, measurable, quantifiable change on the streets of our communities, in the shadows of our shelters, and, most importantly, in the lives of homeless people. Change with a performance outcome of ending homelessness.

The Samaritan Initiative encompassing this NOFA and the President's proposal for 2004 intends to end homelessness for those people experiencing chronic homelessness on the streets of our communities.

As you are, I am appalled by the number of people on the streets and in encampments.

And I reject, as you do, the notion that these folk **want** to be on the streets.

There may indeed be a few who do want to stay outside, but the **vast majority** of the thousands of homeless people I've spoken to over the years had a common wish – **not** to be outside. **To be in housing.**

And the Samaritan Initiative is intended to respond to **that consumer preference**. To create housing for those experiencing chronic homelessness **outside**.

People living on the streets or in encampments is a social disgrace. We should neither accommodate this situation or be anaesthetized to its presence. That's unacceptable.

In my travels across the country I have seen the future of homelessness. It is in the growing number of our neighbors living in encampments - on the streets, and sidewalks, under highway bridges and cloverleafs, and in the marshes and woods – in urban, small city, and rural areas of our country, overflowing our shelters and programs.

OR It is in the growing number of innovative and entrepreneurial initiatives across the country that focus on

results, accountability, and performance outcomes of ending homelessness.

It is one or the other, I believe. We cannot accommodate a response that houses most of our neighbors and leaves some homeless. As the Indianapolis 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness says, such accommodation is unworthy of such a caring community. Or I would paraphrase, unworthy of such a caring nation.

Homeless people cannot be left half-housed and half-sheltered. We now have the technologies to ensure a home for **every** American, no matter what the disability or circumstance. The technologies are there. And now we need the resources.

And the Samaritan Initiative, beginning with this \$35 million NOFA, will provide the opportunity for innovative and entrepreneurial solutions to emerge to end this disgrace.

Some innovative ideas that house those with disabilities and long-term homelessness already demonstrate that solutions are possible. I participated and created several in my years outside government. I have now seen others that work.

Expanding and replicating what is working – that is, what is resulting in performance outcomes that **end homelessness** – now that investment makes sense.

New ideas that end homelessness for individuals or families experiencing chronic homelessness are encouraged and welcomed.

The objective of the Samaritan Initiative is consistent with our larger mission to end chronic homelessness and all profiles of

homelessness. **Prioritization does not mean exclusivity.**

All profiles – non-disabled singles and families – are in focus.

Around this country that new standard of expectation is taking root. No longer are we willing to tolerate simply managing the issue, or maintaining the response or accommodating the status quo. From this President, this Cabinet, Governors and Mayors, national, and state, and local advocacy organizations are all uniting around that one objective, the one goal, the one mission – ending chronic homelessness.

From The National Alliance's 10 Year Plan, to the President's budget initiative to end chronic homelessness, to Interagency Councils being developed in states, to 10 year plans being developed by cities all across the country – there is one message emerging. This social disgrace, this social wrong needs to **end**.

Whether in Massachusetts, my home state, where last week the new Governor signed an Executive order establishing a state Interagency Council on Homelessness or two weeks ago the President increasing resources by 14% or three weeks ago being with the Mayor of Chicago at a press conference announcing his endorsement of a 10-year plan to end homelessness in our nation's third largest city, or several weeks ago speaking with the Los Angeles Homelessness Services Authority as they begin the 10-year planning process in our nation's second largest city – the trajectory is clear. The federal, state and local governments are stepping up to formulate the strategies to end the disgrace.

Finally, I was recently invited to speak to the plenary session of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. With the blessing of its President, Mayor Tom Menino, I challenged the Mayors. I

asked that by January, 2004 100 mayors endorse 10-year plans to end homelessness in their communities. The response was positive.

Now, I extend the same challenge to all of you. Work together in collaboration with state and local government, the business community, providers and advocates, to begin the planning process in your own community to end homelessness in the next 10 years. Partner to make your community one of those one hundred.

When we started the process that led to this NOFA, we were told it could not be done. Too many obstacles. Too many barriers. So much turf.

Some feel the same way about planning to end homelessness. They think it is a futile process fraught with

societal and cultural barriers. But in major cities and smaller communities these processes are moving forward despite the voices of cynicism and negativity.

And you know those same cynical voices try to demoralize the great mission we all share. The mission to which we were called. Ending homelessness. Let's make this NOFA, also thought to be impossible, an investment in and a symbol of that future.

What some said could not be done, will some day come to an end through our remoralized commitment to a new standard of expectation – the abolition of homelessness.